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## Woodlan Class Project Stands Up to Bullying

Published by News-Sentinal.com on Dec 23, 2009

### *Information packet created for teachers and students*

**FORT WAYNE, IN** - Physical, verbal and even cyber bullying has become a part of everyday life at Woodlan Junior-Senior High School. That was, until one class decided to do something about it.

The Thinking Errors course is a class to help disruptive or troubled students, mostly freshmen and sophomores - make better decisions in their lives. Along with learning those lessons, the students also take on a large project. This year, it was Bullying 101.

"We just wanted to get the information out to teachers to tell them (that bullying) goes on in school," said freshman Quade McCord.

"I think most of the teachers don't (even) know it's going on, but it is," added freshman Brittney Davis.

To raise awareness for both students and teachers, the eight students in the class, along with their four mentors, created an informational kit for teachers and then put up posters around the school for students to list the types of bullying and to encourage the end of it in their school.

"Not only do students need to know, but teachers do, too, because they need to know how to stop it," McCord said.

To first figure out how to best attack this issue, the Thinking Errors class sent out surveys to teachers and students to ask their perceptions of bullying. The answers were shocking.

"(Students) don't think teachers care. (They think) they just brush it off," Davis said about the responses. And most of the students said they have been bullied in the past or even bullied other students.

After compiling the information - all gathered from Web sites and personal experience, the class then spent two months putting together the kits that included the types of bullying, tips on how to recognize bullying, a hot-line number, a bullying video and then a hot line that was recently presented to the teachers.



"You could tell it really put a different feeling on the teachers," said senior and mentor Blake Well.

The teachers were so impressed by the program that it caught the attention of the central district staff and the school board. The class has been told that they might present the kit at a board meeting and possibly to other schools in the area.

"For them to be able to pull off a project like this and come through it is (great)," said Paige Mostella, a Thinking Errors teacher.

The students don't expect to stop bullying anytime soon, but they do hope their effort, at the very least, will make a little bit of difference.

"We want (future students) to come into a safe environment where bullying is not a problem," McCord said.

## **District News Briefs**

### **Penn High Bomb Threat Raises Police Questions**

Published by the South Bend Tribune December 18, 2009



#### ***Officer Says School Told Him No Report Needed.***

A bomb threat found in a Penn High School bathroom last week is making police nervous, but not because of what the note said. Instead, police say the suspect is the same student suspended from the school several weeks ago for a similar threat. And the school's resource officer says administrators told him not to write a police report about the incident.

Lt. Chris DeMeyer, Penn High School resource officer, said he was informed this week that a bomb threat had been found at the school on Dec. 8. DeMeyer said school officials, using images from surveillance cameras and testimony from witnesses, identified a junior as the suspect in the case. According to DeMeyer's report, the student was previously suspended from the school for a threat found on Oct. 29 stating the school would be bombed on Dec. 3.

Earlier this month, Penn-Harris-Madison School Corp. spokeswoman Teresa Carroll said a student had been suspended and sent to an "alternative" school. This week, Carroll said the student had attended the alternative school but was allowed back at Penn after a psychological evaluation. "The four-page psychological report said that he was absolutely no threat to anyone," Carroll said. But Carroll said the student is suspended again and is expected to be expelled.

DeMeyer's other worry, however, is what to think about what he says was administrators' other request: not to write a police report about the incident. DeMeyer said school officials met with the student's parents and agreed with them that a police report wouldn't be made. DeMeyer said school Principal Steve Hope and district assistant superintendent Nancy Nimtz told him not to write a police report about the bomb threat, saying it wasn't necessary. "To come to me and say we made a deal with the parents that there's not going to be a police report is asking me to not do my job," DeMeyer said. "It's asking me to commit a crime by not reporting on it." Unsure what to do about the district's request, DeMeyer said he contacted Sheriff Frank Canarecci, who told him to make the report and to send it to prosecutors for evaluation.

But Carroll disputed DeMeyer's story and said school officials were merely asking whether a police report was necessary, not telling him he shouldn't write it. "They just wanted to know what the purpose was in making the report," Carroll said. "It was part of a conversation." Carroll said this latest incident is just another in the recent struggle between Penn officials and the St. Joseph County police department to understand each other's concerns. "Educators look at things one way, people in law enforcement look at them another way," Carroll said. "There's very little that's black and white, and we have to be able to discuss that."

But DeMeyer and St. Joseph County police spokesman Sgt. Bill Redman said their main concern is that officers be allowed to perform their duties. According to DeMeyer's report, school officials knew about the threat for several days before he was informed, leaving him to track down witnesses nearly a week after the note was found. "From a public safety standpoint," Redman said, "we need to know that stuff, and they're not helping anyone by not getting the police involved."

## Schools Add Hours, Weekends to Boost Learning Time

Published by the Associated Press on Nov 28th, 2009.

**Gary, IN-** Imagine going to school on a Saturday or staying an extra 30 minutes at school during the week – and liking it.

Indiana school districts are finding creative ways to add instruction time in an effort to close the achievement gap reduce a loss of knowledge over the summer and shore up student test scores.

The moves in schools like the KIPP LEAD Academy in Gary are part of a national push to extend classroom time. President Barack Obama in March proposed that U.S. schools lengthen school days or shorten summer vacations to align the U.S. with countries including Thailand, Scotland and the Netherlands, which have moved to a 200-day school year. Israel, South Korea and Japan lead the world with 243 days in the classroom. U.S. schools average 180 days of instructional time.

KIPP, a Gary charter school, has taken an aggressive approach with four-hour Saturday classes that meet about every three weeks. Students also are in school from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday, from 8 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. on Fridays and for three weeks in the summer.

School Leader Soenda Howell said the school surveys students at the beginning of each semester to see what classes they would like to see on Saturdays. As a result, Saturday classes like drama or Spanish are likely to be ones that will engage students.

Sixth-grader Imani Dixon was initially resistant but has come to enjoy the sessions.

"I like my weekends," she said. "I enjoy going to dance practice and I don't like to wake up early. But the classes made me want to get to school."

Other schools are considering extended time but say making significant changes would require negotiations with teachers' unions.

The School City of Hammond offers an extended time pilot program in its Title I elementary schools to help with reading and writing instruction. Students at the schools receive an extra 30 to 45 minutes a day of instruction.

"It's really exciting as we look at what's making a difference," said Title I coordinator Jana Abshire.

East Chicago schools Superintendent Michael Harding said extended time is crucial as students prepare for spring ISTEP testing.

The district began offering an extra hour of instruction this fall at Lincoln Elementary School and hopes to expand to two other elementaries in the coming weeks.

"Extended day is really critical right now," Harding said. "We've got 70 days until we get into more testing, so we're looking for any way to get kids more instruction time."

Merrillville Assistant Superintendent Mark Sperling said any move to extended time requires a lot of planning, from talking to teachers and parents to rearranging bus schedules. The district offers a freshman academy tutorial that goes to 4:30 p.m. on weekdays.

"Nothing can be done in vacuum," Sperling said. "If you're going to do it, you have to do it as school community. We would want to work very closely with teachers and the school community."

## Ex-Coach Bonds Out; Sex Charge Details Revealed

Posted by NWITimes.com on Dec 19th, 2009

**LAPORTE, IN** - Then-assistant LaPorte High School volleyball coach Robert Ashcraft made first contact with his victim in fall 2007, kissing the 15-year-old girl after volleyball practice, police said. The situation progressed to fondling in 2008 and intercourse at least 10 times beginning in May or June 2008, the victim told police.



Those events were revealed in LaPorte County court documents detailing three felony charges against Ashcraft, 45, for having sexual contact with a member of the volleyball team. The incidents related by the victim to an Indiana State Police detective occurred during the girl's sophomore year at LaPorte High School, court documents stated.

According to the documents, a fondling took place in February 2008 in a LaPorte County parking lot. And the two had sex at one point in Ashcraft's pickup truck while parked near the refuse area of the LaPorte County Fairgrounds, the victim told police.

Ashcraft also gave the victim a cell phone intended only for communication between the coach and the victim, court records showed. Police said they found several text messages sent by Ashcraft to the victim after examining the phone.

Ashcraft appeared on the charges in LaPorte County court early Friday. A not-guilty plea was entered on his behalf. Ashcraft faces two felony counts of sexual misconduct with a minor and one felony count of child seduction.

LaPorte Community School Corp. officials announced Ashcraft's resignation as junior varsity volleyball coach at a district meeting Nov. 11, 2008. Assistant Superintendent Jim Dermody declined to comment on the specific allegations against Ashcraft on Friday, confirming only the defendant was employed as an assistant junior varsity volleyball coach between August 2003 and October 2008, when the district accepted Ashcraft's resignation.

## Regional News Briefs

### Students Fight Youth Violence

Published by: the Chicago Tribune on, 2009.

**CHICAGO, IL**- Teirra Scott, a 16-year-old from Collins Academy High School on the West Side, pulled no punches in addressing 200 students from the city and suburbs at a summit on gun violence.

"I think you should stand up and be bold enough to point your friends in the right direction," she told them Saturday at Westinghouse College Prep High School. "But parents should also come up with proposals for after-school programs, rather than having kids standing on the street corners."

Her call to action was a common refrain at the summit, which featured workshops with names such as "Taking the Path to Manhood" and "Anger is Not Your Main Problem."

It was Uhlich Children's Advantage Network's second such summit in the past year amid reports from the Chicago Board of Education that 14 students already have been slain since the start of the school year.

"Our kids are living in dangerous times," said UCAN spokeswoman Jodi Doane. "It's not an anomaly any more for them to know someone who has been shot."



We want violence prevention programs out in the community. The young people have the ideas, and we have to get adults to the table to support them."

Many of the students -- such as Scott, whose cousin was recently shot and killed -- had personal experiences with gun violence. Those stories came mostly from schools in impoverished neighborhoods on the city's South and West sides, including from Fenger Academy High School, which became a national flash point on youth violence after the video-taped beating death of 16-year-old Derrion Albert outside the school in September.

But for Johanna Rosenberg, a 17-year-old from New Trier High School in Wilmette, such street violence is far from the norm. "I know gun violence is not something I see every day," she said. "The most we see are bullies, like guys who put on a pose or say, 'Look at me. I'm a jock. I'm cool.' "

But organizers said participation from students of more advantaged backgrounds is key if they are to present a united front against youth violence and convince parents, community leaders and policy makers to take the problem seriously.

Rosenberg, along with fellow New Trier students Sydney Koffman, 16, and Amanda Monto, 17, were inspired to join the anti-violence effort after Illinois state Sen. James Meeks, D-Chicago, visited their school to highlight the economic and social disparities between city and suburban schools.

"People who are in power to make these decisions should start making them so we can make a difference," Rosenberg said.

Carolyn Sanders, program director for the Roseland-Pullman Boys and Girls Club, said the summit should help develop student leaders who then can advocate against youth violence in their communities.

"It builds their confidence," she said. "This gives them the opportunity to speak on some of these issues and lead on them. We need them because we're in an area of the city where gun activity, gang activity and drug activity is real bad."

Organizers conceded that growing youth violence is the result of a complex web of social problems that will not be solved overnight. A UCAN teen survey in 2007 found that 59 percent of black teens in the Chicago area knew someone who has been shot in street violence and that 56 percent of Chicago-area teens believe they would benefit from more violence prevention programs.

UCAN has been dealing with the issue since 1997 with its "Hands Without Guns" program, which has run anti-violence workshops for more than 2,000 youths. The next step, said Doane, will be to set up a youth steering committee to organize regional school assemblies highlighting youth violence and to help advocate for more state and federal money for anti-violence programs.

"We've all said we've got to stop talking and start doing," Doane said. "Every time you reach a young person, it has a ripple effect. We're asking our young people to come out of themselves and say there is something different out there."

## **4 Evanston Students Charged in Beating After Game**

Published by the Chicago Tribune on Dec, 18th, 2009

**EVANSTON, IL**-Four Evanston Township High School students have been charged with misdemeanors after a student from New Trier Township High School was pulled from his car and beaten after a close basketball game between the schools. Officials are seeking video they hope will shed light on the attack. The incident occurred Dec. 11 in the parking lot of Northwestern University's Welsh-Ryan Arena in Evanston, after the New Trier basketball team defeated Evanston 54-50.

"The New Trier student was seriously injured," Evanston Superintendent Eric Witherspoon said in a letter to parents this week. New Trier officials said Thursday that the student was treated at a hospital and released the night of the incident.

All four Evanston teens admitted to drinking and told police they were wearing body paint when they entered a parking lot after the game and started pounding on the victim's car. The victim, from Winnetka, rolled down his window to tell the Evanston students to stop and was struck in the face with a "blunt object," police said. He was then partially pulled

from the vehicle and struck repeatedly in the face with fists, which resulted in a broken nose and facial lacerations, police said. The four Evanston teens fled when two friends of the victim got out of the car but were arrested moments later by police who were in the area, authorities said.

Samuel Mendelson, 18, of the 1400 block of Rosalie Street; Zachary Shiffrin, 18, of the 1000 block of Judson Avenue; and Gabriel Siegel, 18, of the 1400 block of Elinor Place, were charged with misdemeanor battery and consumption of alcohol by a minor. Harrison Snider, 18, of the 2100 block of Orrington Avenue, was charged with disorderly conduct and consumption of alcohol by a minor, authorities said.

"Eyewitnesses reported that an adult recorded the incident with a hand-held video camera," Witherspoon's letter said. "I am asking that person to please contact me and provide school officials with a copy of the recording." "I ask you to join me in apologizing to the students and staff at New Trier High School and to all their fans," Witherspoon said.

New Trier Township High School District 203 Superintendent Linda Yonke issued a statement Thursday applauding the response of police and officials at Evanston.

*For video coverage on this story visit: <http://www.wqntv.com/news/wqntv-evanston-new-trier-fight-dec17.0.1143152.story>*

## **National News Briefs**

### **Police: Man Tried To Sneak Teen Out Of School**

Published by: the KyPost on Dec 19th, 2009.

**BOONE COUNTY, KY** - A Cincinnati man is facing several charges for allegedly trying to sneak a 13-year-old girl out of her Northern Kentucky school.

The Boone County Sheriff's Office says Eric Sears, 20, of Price Hill, "persistently" tried to have school officials release the 7th grader to him on Thursday. Investigators say Sears showed up to Conner Middle School around 10:15 a.m. presenting himself as the girl's uncle. He allegedly told the receptionist he had to pick the girl up because her mother was in a serious car accident.



When his request was denied, investigators say Sears went to a nearby business, used their phone and called the school identifying himself as an uncle who is listed as an emergency contact telling them to release the girl. The receptionist alerted a school resource officer who took Sears into custody as he was approaching the school a second time.

The school resource officer determined that Sears and the girl met on a telephone chat line about one month earlier. After numerous phone calls and text messages, the two planned on running away together, according to investigators. Sears is charged with unlawful possession of a weapon on school property, theft of identity of another without consent, possession of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia, and custodial interference. He is currently behind bars at the Boone County Detention Center on a \$25,000 bond.

"This is just another example of how the collaborative effort between the schools and the Sheriff's Department works to keep our children safe," said Sheriff Michael Helmig. He reminds parents to be nosy when it comes to children's communications encouraging them to check the messages and numbers dialed.

*For video coverage of this story visit: <http://www.kypost.com/mediacenter/local.aspx?videoid=41944@wcpo.dayport.com&navCatId=23>*

### **Schools in Tough Neighborhoods Turn to Yoga**

Published by Mercury News.com on Dec 8th, 2009

**SAN JOSE, CA**- Luis Gutierrez is sounding like a human kazoo, demonstrating what he calls the "ego-buster breath." As the speaker's hands tent his nose and he exhales in a loud hum, few of the two dozen freshmen at Overfelt High in San Jose are smirking or rolling their eyes.

After the students try this newest yoga technique and report vibrations in their noses, throats and brains, Gutierrez explains the breathing will help calm their nerves. Use this in many situations, he advises, including the times when teachers suddenly call on you in class.

What began as small pilot programs has suddenly spread as more South Bay schools in neighborhoods challenged by poverty, drugs and gang violence turn to the power of yoga as a stress reducer. Classes by Youth Empowerment Seminars, or "YES!", teach not only breathing but nutrition, lifestyle and values discussion.



Overfelt Principal Vito Chiala is so impressed with the changes "YES!" has induced in some of the toughest freshmen that he hopes to offer the six-week program to the whole freshman class in January. Initially a skeptic, Chiala himself took a course and found that practice every morning helps him deal calmly with the demands of leading a 1,730-student school in East San Jose.

At nearby Yerba Buena High, all 540 freshmen are taking "YES!" after a pilot project last spring proved successful. Principal Juan Cruz reports that his school's football team now uses yoga as a way to focus before games and to decompress afterward.

When his friends found out, hefty linebacker Brian Zarate, 17, said, their reaction was, "Ha ha, you're doing yoga!" he said. But he didn't care, because yoga has improved his sleep and his game.

### *Hard Neighborhoods*

At schools hard hit by neighborhood violence, gang pressure, parental job loss and homelessness, the centuries-old Indian discipline of yoga may turn out to be an effective tool in helping young people cope with both crises and day-to-day life.

"We can't change the big system, but we can definitely change the kids' way of dealing with all the stress," said teacher Jenna Granger of the International Association for Human Values, the parent group of "YES!" "People who get to experience yoga usually come from a privileged background," said Gutierrez, who is training to be a "YES!" Instructor. In contrast, the foundation brings its stress-reducing program to communities suffering from poverty, crime and disaster, from destitute Haiti to bereft post-Katrina New Orleans. The six-week class teaches students to avoid conflict, "how to focus on school and how to study better," said Overfelt freshman Rosavelia Valencia, 14. Classmate Priscilla Orabuena, 15, said the skills are useful. "When you are going to get into a fight" — like when people are talking about you, she said — "you want to do something to them. But you breathe and feel calm and just walk away."

### *Breathing away Stress*

The program uses games — last week at Overfelt, students were playing musical yoga mats — to reach students. But the focus is on breathing techniques to deal with stress. According to surveys, East Side students report the program has improved their sleep, focus, calmness and mood, and general feeling, said Irene Yamane, a program manager. At first, students are skeptical. "I don't really like doing things in front of people," like stretching, Overfelt freshman Gina De La Rosa said. "I have school stress. I have drama on the street, I could get jammed," the 14-year-old said. At home, her bedridden mother is seriously ill. "I have a lot of pressure built up inside of me, and when it comes out, I erupt." But while she downplays the effect of "YES!", she's also used its techniques. Recently, in the midst of a classroom confrontation, she suddenly remembered: just breathe. She did. She calmed down. And she realized, "I don't have to scare teachers." Her mother, Lucy Ramirez, has noticed a difference, as if Gina has emerged from a dark shadow.

Chiala hopes "YES!" will give kids tools to help stay calm, better control impulses and take care of themselves. How to explain the power of the breath over human emotions? "It sounds like Darth Vader," said An Ha, 14, a Yerba Buena freshman. She uses it when her little brother behaves annoyingly. With yoga breathing, said Alejandro Adame, 14, an Overfelt freshman, "You just take a moment to not get angry."

## **Recent School Violence**

### **Police Officer Hurt in Fight Has Concussion**

Published by: local12.com Post on, Dec 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

**CINCINNATI, OH-** A Cincinnati Police Officer, caught in a fight involving thirty junior high kids on Tuesday, is now suffering from a concussion, according to doctors who examined the officer today. Veteran officer Mike Roth went back to the doctor because of recurring headaches.

Roth also has bruises and cuts after breaking up a fight Tuesday night at Rees E. Price Academy, an elementary school in Price Hill. It began as a fight between just two students. As Officer Roth walked them back inside, one of them punched him in the head.



Captain Kim Frey, Cincinnati Police: "Thirty kids attack him, punching, kicking, grabbing his gun belt, bizarre, this is mob mentality."

Charges range from assault on a police officer to disorderly conduct and obstructing justice. Stephanie White, the mother of one of the teens, was also arrested for trying to keep her son from being arrested. The Cincinnati Public School Athletic Director called the behavior unacceptable, and canceled the basketball season.

Dave Dierker, Athletic Director CPS: "If you had one or two rogue, say those two expelled, but talking 20 people involved on an attack on police officer, no justifying that."

What happened outside the school could reflect some of what's going on in the neighborhood. Police and school officials say they will work together on a problem that is clearly bigger than a fight after a basketball game.

School officials say most of the students involved were basketball players. Two students are recommended for expulsion, four for suspension. The investigation continues.

For video coverage of this story visit: <http://www.local12.com/mediacenter/local.aspx?videoid=43882@wkrc.dayport.com>

## **Technology & Internet Safety**

### **Teens Ignore Laws Against Texting While Driving**

Published by MSNBC, on Dec 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009

**LOS ANGELES, CA** - Karen Cordova, a 17-year-old high school student and part-time supermarket cashier, admits she sometimes texts friends while driving home from work late at night, lonely and bored. The Arizona teenager knows it's illegal in Phoenix and dangerous. She once almost drifted into oncoming traffic while looking at her phone.

But would a nationwide ban stop Cordova and her friends from texting in their cars? No way, she said. "Nobody is going to listen," Cordova said.



With momentum building in Washington for all 50 U.S. states to outlaw text messaging behind the wheel, there is evidence that the key demographic targeted by such legislation, teen drivers, will not pay much attention.

At least one major study has found that, with mobile devices now central to their lives, young people often ignore laws against using cell phones or texting in the car. Already 19 states and the District of Columbia ban texting by all drivers, while 9 others prohibit it by young drivers.

For more information on this story visit: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com>

### **Nearly 1 in 3 Older Teens Gets 'Sexting' Messages**

Published by: MSNBC, on Dec 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

#### ***Study Says 6 Percent of Those as Young as 12 Have Received Racy Texts***

Thirty percent of 17-year-olds who have cell phones say they have received "sexting" photos or video messages, according to a new report from the Pew Internet & American Life Project.

Eight percent of 17-year-olds say they have sent such sexually suggestive images. Among teens ages 12 to 17 years old, 15 percent say they have received nude or nearly nude images of someone they know via text messaging on their

cell phones, while 4 percent say they have sent such photos. Among 12- and 13-year olds, 6 percent say they have received "sex messages."

"It's an issue that teens grapple with and deal with in their lives, and one that deserves attention," said Amanda Lenhart, Pew senior research specialist who worked on the "Teens and Sexting" report.

"In our focus groups, we heard that plenty of teens had experienced this, either by sending the suggestive images, receiving them or by encountering them second-hand on a passed-around cell phone, hearing about friends doing it, hearing about it in the hallway."



Sexting is gaining national attention, with at least two teen suicides in the past 18 months associated with the problem, and lawmakers and prosecutors around the country grappling with how to handle such cases.

The Pew report, based on focus groups with 800 teens in Denver, Atlanta and New York, mirrors the findings of a recent poll by the Associated Press and MTV of more than 1,200 teens which concluded that more than a quarter of them have been involved in sexting in some form.

Phone is 'major source of content' for teens

"The cell phone is such a vital part of these teens' lives that it isn't surprising that it's a major source of content for them; both positive content and content that's more worrisome," Lenhart said.

In a 2004 survey of teens, Pew said, 18 percent of 12-year-olds had a cell phone, compared to 58 percent of 12-year-olds now. Five years ago, 64 percent of 17-year-olds had a cell phone, compared to 83 percent now. In addition, cell phones themselves have changed dramatically since 2004, with many of them now having internet access.

Teens who pay their own cell phone bills are "more likely to send 'sexts,'" Pew said in the report, with 17 percent saying they have done so, compared to 3 percent of teens "who do not pay for, or only pay a portion of the cost" of their cell phone bills.

"Just 9 percent of teens who sent sexy images by text had parents who restricted the number of texts or other messages they could send; 28 percent of teens who didn't send these texts had parents who limited their child's texting," the Pew report said.

"One younger high school boy told us that he never sends or receives sexually suggestive images via text because 'my mom goes through my phone.' However, another high school boy described how he password-protected images to keep others from viewing them."

*Happens 'far more than any poll can show'*

Parry Aftab, executive director of WiredSafety.org, said sexting is much more of a problem than most parents realize. "It's not 'that kid' who's doing it, it's your kid," she said. "If your kid hasn't taken a (suggestive) picture and shared it with somebody else, in all likelihood they've seen one, they may have possession of one or they may be sending them around."

**For video coverage and more information on this story visit:** [http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/34422197/ns/technology\\_and\\_science-tech\\_and\\_gadgets/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/34422197/ns/technology_and_science-tech_and_gadgets/)

## Plainfield East High School Sexting Scandal

Published by: ChicagoTribune.com on Dec 24th, 2009.

### **9 Cell Phones Seized After 16-Year-Old Sends Nude Photo of Herself to Male Student, Police Say**

Plainfield police said they have seized nine cell phones after a 16-year-old high school honors student took a nude photograph of herself and sent it to a male student. The picture quickly went viral on campus, and a Plainfield East High School official contacted authorities last week, prompting what police are calling their largest-ever sexting investigation. In one sign of how quickly the photo spread, some of the original senders told police they had received it

from other people last week, according to court documents.

Viewing the photograph and forwarding it are technically violations of child pornography statutes, though police and the Will County state's attorney's office say they typically handle such cases through juvenile probation. No one has been charged. "It's something that's starting to become more and more of a problem," said Plainfield police Sgt. Anthony Novak, who supervises the department's four school-based officers.

A recent Pew Research Center survey found that 4 percent of teen cell phone owners ages 12 to 17 reported sending a "nude or nearly nude" image of themselves to one another and 15 percent reported receiving such a photo. The survey found that students whose parents paid their cell phone bill were less likely to send or receive such images.

It's not clear how many of Plainfield East's roughly 1,300 students received or forwarded the photo, but it could easily number in the hundreds, police said. Police also aren't sure why the girl sent the photo, but they hope to retrieve text messages the two exchanged before and after it was sent, Novak said. He described the girl and boy as acquaintances. After a Plainfield East official contacted police Dec. 16, the girl told a detective she sent the "fully nude" photo of herself to a boy at the school this month, according to court documents. The boy told police he sent the photo to four other students, three of whom reported forwarding it. Nine cell phones -- including two that were already found to contain the photo -- have been turned over to computer forensic specialists at the Will County Sheriff's Department.

A school district spokesman declined to comment Wednesday, citing student privacy concerns. School board Vice President Roger Bonuchi said only that parents should warn their children against "doing immoral acts."

Russell Sabella, a Florida professor who is past president of the American School Counselors Association, said even bright teens can be overly trusting. He advises students not to write or send anything they wouldn't want shared on stage. Even if the person you're sexting doesn't forward the photo, he or she could lose their phone and someone else could distribute the images, Sabella said. "It's such a devastating situation," Sabella said of the Plainfield case. "The schools have an opportunity here to help other kids understand the consequences -- just because students don't see the victim (in person) doesn't mean the victim doesn't get hurt."

## Facebook to Enhance User Safety Through Formation of Global Advisory Board

Published by: PRNewswire.com Dec 6th, 2009.

**PALO ALTO, CA** -As the latest step in its commitment to improve safety on Facebook and across the Web, today the company announced the formation of the Facebook Safety Advisory Board, a group of five leading Internet safety organizations from North America and Europe that will serve in a consultative capacity to the company on issues related to online safety. The five organizations on the board are Common Sense Media, ConnectSafely, WiredSafety, Childnet International and The Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI).



Collaboration with five leading Internet safety organizations from North America and Europe will begin by building new online library of materials for educators, parents and teens.

Facebook plans to regularly meet with board members to review the existing safety resources it provides its users, develop new materials, and seek advice on general safety best practices on an ongoing basis. The first task of the board will be to oversee an overhaul of the safety content located in Facebook's Help Center. The goal of the overhaul is to create a comprehensive resource with specific educational content for parents, teachers, and teens.

The Safety Advisory Board is the latest component of an aggressive global safety agenda for the company. Last week, the New York Attorney General's office cited Facebook's cooperation in identifying and disabling the accounts of registered sex offenders, and in early 2008, Facebook signed an agreement with 49 Attorneys General to help protect children from online predators. Facebook also participated in the Internet Safety Technical Task Force, a group of internet businesses, non-profit organizations, academics, and technology experts that worked together to identify effective tools and technologies to create a safer environment on the Internet for youth. The company is currently partnering with MTV on its "A Thin Line" campaign to prevent digital abuse, and worked with the BBC last month to promote its "Bulletproof" campaign to end cyberbullying. Facebook regularly invites safety organizations like the

National Crime Prevention Council to blog about safety for its users, and maintains an active campaign of safety outreach to schools and community groups.

"We believe that the only way to keep kids safe online is for everyone who wants to protect them to work together," said Elliot Schrage, Vice-President of Global Communications and Public Policy at Facebook. "The formation of a board to advise specifically on safety issues is a positive, innovative and collaborative step towards creating a more robust safety environment, and we are thrilled that such a well-respected, trusted group of organizations has joined us in this endeavor."

While Facebook has consulted with external organizations for years on its safety practices, the company created the Safety Advisory Board as a way to gather more feedback and to formalize the relationships it currently maintains with these organizations. Facebook indicated that it may add additional members over time as it identifies appropriate candidates, and as it looks to broaden international representation on the board.



"FOSI is an international online safety organization dedicated to making the Internet safer for all families who use it," said Stephen Balkam, FOSI CEO. "We are honored to be chosen to serve on the Facebook Safety Advisory Board and will work to provide user-friendly guidance on responsible social networking communication and promote awareness on how to be a good digital citizen online."

"At Childnet we are proud to work constructively with others to help make the internet a great and safe place for children," said Will Gardner, CEO of Childnet International. "We look forward to bringing over 14 years experience of working with and for children and young people and developing educational resources to the Safety Advisory Board of Facebook. We look forward to the opportunity of advising and influencing one of the most popular social networking providers in the world on an issue that is so crucial to children's enjoyment of and participation in this environment."

"WiredSafety provides help, awareness, resources and education to cyberspace users of all ages covering all digital risks," said Parry Aftab, Executive Director of Wired Safety. "Our volunteers have been helping people online since 1995, and WiredSafety, along with our Teenangels and WiredMoms programs, has been advising Facebook on safety best practices for years. We are pleased to continue and formalize that relationship as a member of the Facebook Safety Advisory Board. Users helping users and awareness and education are central to keeping everyone safe online. We are excited about the opportunities to do even more by empowering Facebook's users and providing them with information they need."

"Having advised Facebook on its privacy and safety policies since 2006, we're happy to formalize that relationship by being part of Facebook's new Safety Advisory Board," said Anne Collier, co-director of ConnectSafely. "Our hope is to proactively look out for the safety and privacy concerns of Facebook users, especially its younger ones."

*For more information on this story visit: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/facebook-to-enhance-user-safety-through-formation-of-global-advisory-board-78656592.html>*

*For information on Facebook user safety visit: <http://www.facebook.com/privacy/explanation.php?ref=pf>*

## **Study: 'Digital Abuse' Hits Half of Youth**

Published by Cnet.com on Dec 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009

A study conducted by the Associated Press and MTV pretty much confirms what many Internet safety experts have been saying for the past several months: Young people are far more likely to experience problems online from their peers or from their own indiscretions than from adult predators.

But that's hardly to say that there's no need for concern. The AP/MTV study, released Thursday, found that 50 percent of 14- to 24-year-olds have experienced some type of digital abuse.

The AP/MTV study interviewed 1,247 teens and young adults in what the authors call an "online panel that is representative of the entire U.S. population." Respondents were recruited from KnowledgePanel. Details about the study and a campaign to empower youth to stop digital abuse are available at AThinLine.org.

The study's definition of digital abuse includes writing something online that wasn't true, sharing information that a person didn't want shared, writing something mean, spreading false rumors, threatening physical harm, impersonation, spying, posting embarrassing photos or video, being pressured to send naked photos, being teased, and encouraging people to hurt themselves.

As have previous studies, this one points to the need for educating young people on how to empower and protect themselves. While parental and educator involvement is crucial, young people themselves need to embrace and "own" digital safety messages--taught not as "Internet safety" lessons but as part of a larger worldview on how to thrive in the digital age. (For more on this, see Online Safety 3.0: Protecting & Empowering Youth from ConnectSafely.org)

For more information on this story visit: [http://news.cnet.com/8301-19518\\_3-10408453-238.html](http://news.cnet.com/8301-19518_3-10408453-238.html)

## **Drugs & Alcohol**

### **Teens' First Choice for Drugs is In Your Cabinet**

Published by: Etruth.com, on Dec 17th, 2009.

ELKHART, IN - With her slim figure, blond hair and blue eyes, Julie looks like any other high school student. Nothing about her indicates she's a recovering drug addict.

Julie -- whose name has been changed and who has asked to remain anonymous for this story -- has been sober for the last year-and-a-half. Her experiences with drugs started when she was 12 with marijuana and alcohol, and after two years, she began experimenting with prescription drugs.

And that's when things got bad.

Unfortunately Julie's case is not unique. According to Drug Enforcement Administration officials, nearly one in ten high school seniors nationwide have admitted to abusing powerful prescription drugs. Forty percent of teenagers and a roughly equal number of parents believe prescription drugs are safer than harder drugs like cocaine and heroin. And local DEA officials said those trends mirror what's being seen in Indiana.

Julie's older sister got her high the first time. The 18-year-old had been sneaking out of the house and shared marijuana with her 12-year-old sibling to stop her from telling.

At first, Julie got high about once a month. She used more frequently -- about once a week -- after she turned 13, which was also when she started drinking. She would sneak out of the house and go to friends' houses, parks or abandoned houses to party.

When she was 14, a 16-year-old boy gave Julie two Xanax pills to try. Typically Xanax is used to treat anxiety and depression. At the time Julie was also being prescribed the stimulant Adderall to help with Attention Deficit Disorder.

The Xanax made Julie sleepy. She slurred her words and stumbled around. She said it was like being drunk and high at the same time.

"To be honest, it was like a better high because it was stronger," she said. "That's why I liked them."

Mark Giuffre, a 22-year vet of the DEA and resident agent in charge of the Merrillville office, said prescription drug use among teens is a relatively recent phenomenon, about five years old. Giuffre said teens in Indiana and across the country have learned many homes contain pills that provide powerful highs, and as a result they're developing dangerous addictions.

"Our medicine cabinets have become the drug pushers of our lifetime," he said.

The Internet is also factoring into the problem, Giuffre said. Teens no longer have to physically seek out a drug house or corner in their neighborhood. Scoring pills can be as easy as e-mailing a friend with access to an open, fully-stocked medicine cabinet. In some cases prescriptions can even be ordered online.

Julie's Xanax use escalated quickly. She started taking pills every weekend, and increasing her doses. Two pills became three, then five, then seven. The pills were often combined with alcohol, marijuana and Julie's prescribed Adderall. "Usually I'd just pass out and fall asleep," she said.

Run-ins with police began almost immediately after Julie's drug use. She was first taken into custody when she was 14, before her Xanax use had started. Officers found her drunk and high at a party. She wasn't arrested, was given six months of good behavior- told to remain in school and stay out of trouble- and was released to her parents.

During her freshman year at Memorial High School Julie often skipped class to hang out with friends and get high. Typically the only time Julie went to school was to sell marijuana and her Adderall or get marijuana herself.

Shortly after her mandated six months of good behavior had ended Julie was arrested during a party for underage drinking and being a common nuisance. She was given six months of intensive probation, which included community service, a curfew and drug testing.

Julie didn't take well to the probation. She resented having a probation officer on her case and thought she could beat the drug tests, in some cases by using other people's urine. She was wrong. Each failed drug test resulted in a 48-hour stay in the Juvenile Detention Center. She was also placed in a recovery program at Oaklawn Psychiatric Center, but she didn't take the program seriously.

Finally I was just like, 'screw it, I'm caught,'" she said.

When the test came back positive for pills in addition to THC Julie was sent back to JDC, but this stretch was different. This was the first time pills had shown up in one of Julie's drug tests, and probation and court officials familiar with her case wanted to stop Julie's cycle of addiction. Julie was kept in JDC for one month to detox. Then, just a few months before her 16th birthday, she was sent to live at Bashor for one year.

Today things are considerably better for Julie. She's been out of Bashor for several months and is enrolled in the LIFE alternative school program where she said she's doing well. Her probation is over and she's working at a local restaurant.

It took several months in recovery before Julie was able to admit that she's an addict. Today she believes she's lucky to be alive, and knows nothing good will result from a relapse.

"I know if I get in trouble again it's not going to be Bashor," Julie said. "It'll be a lockdown facility."

For more information on this story visit: <http://www.etruth.com/Know/News/Story.aspx?id=500950>

## Youth Gang Awareness - Gangster Disciples

### ***GANGSTER DISCIPLES***

**Alliance:** Folks  
**Gang Make Up:** Mostly African American youths, consists of Spanish chapters and even white chapters.  
**Gang Colors:** Black and Blue  
**Monikers/Graffiti:** The six-point star, the numeral "6" or three "6" numerals in a triangle form, pitchforks, heart with wings, a tail and horns, a three-point crown, numerals "7 4" or "2 7 4" signifying letters "GD" or "BGD."

**Primary Rivals:** Latin Kings, Black P Stones, and Vice Lords  
**Primary Allies:** Black Gangster Street Gang



**Basic Gang History:** Founded in the early 1960, when the Black Disciples, led by David Barksdale, united with the Gangster Disciples, led by Larry Hoover. Since the 1960's a third group called the Black Gangster Street Gang or New Breeds, have evolved. Today the GD's are considered one of the most structured and largest Chicago street gangs with at least 7,300 members locally and with some estimates running as high as 30,000. The Chicago Police Department has identified at least 36 GD factions in the city.



**Structure and Criminal Activities:** Principle criminal activities include narcotics trafficking, homicide, aggravated battery, armed robbery, arson, auto theft, extortion, kidnapping, money laundering, mortgage fraud and assault.

Source: *The Chicago Crime Commission Gang Book*

## SRO Resources

### National School Incident Map



Stay informed on school incident information in your area by visiting the National School Incident Mapping Resource hosted by SafePlans, LLC.

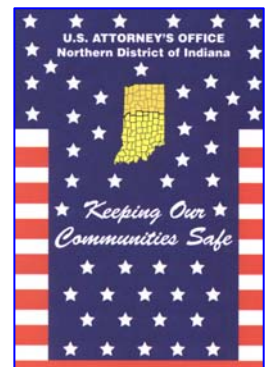
The map is provided to improve situational awareness through the posting of school safety related incidents and success stories. To protect privacy, these postings will be limited to information that is readily accessible through the media and includes topics such as school shootings, bomb threats, evacuations, severe weather, bus accidents and school safety improvements.

The Map can be found @ <http://www.safeplans.com/schoolmap/>.



Please send your comments and suggestions on the "The Monitor" Newsletter to:

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For further information on the L.E.C.C. please visit: [www.keepingourcommunitiessafe.us](http://www.keepingourcommunitiessafe.us)